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R 112151Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1628
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1752
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3679
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0349
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1419
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5119
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1719
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000939

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR R, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KIPR](#) [PGOV](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CRITICAL OP-EDS ON OAS REACTION TO RCTV
SHUTDOWN

¶1. Newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 129,000, 6/8) carried a column by Andres Oppenheimer entitled, "The Sad Spectacle of Cowardice Among Democracies." Quote:

¶2. "The silence of the majority of Latin American countries in the OAS on the closing of Venezuela's oldest television station is a serious setback for freedom of the press and democracy in the region.

¶3. "In one of the most shameless signs of disdain for freedom of the press I have seen in a long time, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Ecuador not only abstained from criticizing Venezuela's decision not to renew RCTV's concession, but openly applauded it.... And what is even harder to understand is that Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina -- the region's three largest countries and with recent authoritarian governments or military dictatorships -- did not mention the RCTV case in their remarks.... Diplomats from several countries said they could not explicitly refer to Venezuela who as a sovereign country has the right not to renew television concessions... that the RCTV case has been submitted for review by the OAS Human Rights Committee... and that Secretary Rice's request for an OAS mission to Venezuela... must be submitted in writing to be discussed.... These are all lame excuses....

¶4. Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina... should at least have expressed their concern over censorship in Venezuela citing the OAS Democratic Charter.... This is the first time since the right-wing military dictatorship of the 70s that I see a group of Latin American countries... openly applauding press censorship without awakening an enraged protest from democracies in the region.... Judging from the sad spectacle in Panama, now Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, who have already begun threatening the independent media... will now feel more encouraged than ever to crush the independent press."

¶5. Conservative, afternoon daily "La Segunda" (circ. 33,000, 6/8) carried a column by columnist Jorge Edwards entitled, "A Story that Can Not Repeat Itself." Quote:

¶6. "It seems fairly clear to me that Hugo Chavez dreams of repeating Fidel Castro's story.... But Hugo Chavez'... onset is far from having the height... of the vision of that revolution that aspired to be different from all previous revolutions.... Chavez' story, from wherever you look, is more mediocre and less inspiring. And Latin America's response, with the exception of a few, is frankly deplorable in the poorness of its principles."

KELLY